

appropriations bills. It is my hope that we can address this daunting challenge in a spirit of cooperation, and work together to replace partisan rhetoric with responsible solutions.

And if OMB Director Daniels really wants to help his president change the climate in Washington, he can work to stop the blame game in its very tired tracks.

#### ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to commend the exceptional achievement of 8 schools in Portland, OR: Humboldt, Marysville, Chief Joseph, Woodmere, Clark, Grout, Kenton and Vestal Elementary Schools.

We have spent 8 weeks in this Chamber talking about education. We have debated the best ways to educate America's children, to raise academic achievement of disadvantaged students, and change failing schools into successes. While we have been busy talking, schools in my home State have been working hard to educate our children.

I want to make special mention of eight schools in the Portland Public School District. Over the past 3 years, these remarkable schools—where more than half of the students come from low income families—made greater strides in raising student test scores than all others in the school district. Due to the hard work of students, parents, teachers, and principals, reading and math scores have significantly improved, the achievement gap between poor and minority students and white students narrowed, and parents, including those new to our country, became part of the fabric of the school community.

Today, I commend the principals and teachers of these great schools. These educators represent an ideal. They are dedicated; they are creative; and they transform children into scholars. They will do anything for their students, even work extra jobs to earn money to buy books for their students. Their hard work has helped their students achieve record academic improvement today and it has set the stage for these children's success for years to come. I thank them for their efforts.

I also thank the parents of these children. They have made a real difference in their children's education by volunteering at school, reading with their children, and encouraging their students to devote their best efforts to their studies.

Above all, I salute the students of these outstanding schools. The countless hours they have spent inside and outside the classroom practicing their reading and writing, working math problems, and conducting science experiments have not been in vain. They have paid off in a remarkable way. Many of these students don't speak English as their first language; many come from low income families; and all are from areas of the city which had

never expected to see such success. Yet these very students have realized this extraordinary accomplishment.

The improvements in the test scores of these children are incredible. The Oregonian newspaper reports the following: At Humboldt [Elementary], 71 percent of fifth graders in 2000 met or exceeded math benchmarks. Only 31 percent of those students met math standards as third graders in 1998. At Marysville Elementary in Southeast Portland, 78 percent of fifth-graders met math benchmarks in 2000. Thirty-two percent of those students passed the State math test as third graders.

But even more important than these significant gains in test scores, these dedicated students have cultivated a love of learning that will last the rest of their lives. This thirst for knowledge guarantees that this is just the first of many successes to come.

A study by the Portland Public Schools Foundation attributed the advances of these schools to the same principles we have been discussing here: strong principals, high parent involvement, and professional development opportunities for teachers.

I share the achievement of these students with my colleagues because it reminds every member of the U.S. Senate that better education is becoming a reality across America. Our work here is important, but the true source of academic achievement is the dedication, the dreams, and the hard work of students, teachers, and principals like these in Portland. The best we can do is to give them the tools they need to succeed.

In closing, allow me to commend, once again, the students, parents, and educators in these schools for this great accomplishment, for the hope they give us, and for the high standard they set for all of us.

#### REMEMBERING THE MIA'S OF SULTAN YAQUB

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in remembering the Israeli soldiers captured by the Syrians during the 1982 Israeli war in Lebanon.

On June 11, 1982, an Israeli unit battled with a Syrian armored unit in the Bekaa Valley in northeastern Lebanon. Sergeant Zachary Baumel, First Sergeant Zvi Feldman, and Corporal Yehudah Katz were captured by the Syrians that day. They were identified as an Israeli tank crew, and reported missing in Damascus. The Israeli tank, flying the Syrian and Palestinian flag, was greeted with cheers from bystanders.

Since that terrible day in 1982, the governments of Israel and the United States have been doing their utmost by working with the office of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations, and other international bodies to obtain any possible information about the fate of the missing soldiers. According to the Geneva

Convention, Syria is responsible for the fates of the Israeli soldiers because the area in Lebanon where the soldiers disappeared was continually controlled by Syria. To this day, despite promises made by the government of Syria and by the Palestinians, very little information has been released about the condition of Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, and Yehudah Katz.

Monday marked the anniversary of the day that these soldiers were reported missing in action. Nineteen pain-filled years have passed since their families have seen their sons, and still Syria has not revealed their whereabouts nor provided any information as to their condition.

One of these missing soldiers, Zachary Baumel is an American citizen, from my home of Brooklyn, NY. An ardent basketball fan, Zachary began his studies at the Hebrew School in Boro Park. In 1979, he moved to Israel with other family members and continued his education at Yeshivat Hesder, where religious studies are integrated with army service. When the war with Lebanon began, Zachary was completing his military service and was looking forward to attending Hebrew University, where he had been accepted to study psychology. But fate decreed otherwise and on June 11, 1982, he disappeared with Zvi Feldman and Yehudah Katz.

Zachary's parents Yonah and Miriam Baumel have been relentless in their pursuit of information about Zachary and his compatriots. I have worked closely with the Baumels, as well as the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, the American Coalition for Missing Israeli Soldiers, and the MIA Task Force of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. These groups have been at the forefront of this pursuit of justice. I want to recognize their good work and ask my colleagues to join me in supporting their efforts. For nineteen years, these families have been without their children. Answers are long overdue.

I am not only saddened by the plight of Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, and Yehudah Katz, but I am disheartened and angered by the fact that even as we continue to search for answers about their welfare, we must add more names to the list of those for whom we have no knowledge of their location, health, or safety.

In a clear-cut violation of international law, three Israeli soldiers were abducted by Hezbollah on October 7, 2000 while on operational duty along the border fence in the Dov Mountain range along Israel's border with Lebanon. The soldiers—Sergeant Adi Avitan of Tiberias, Staff Sergeant Binyamin Avraham of Bnei Brak, and Staff Sergeant Omar Souad of Salma—are believed to have been wounded during the incident.

According to an investigation by the IDF Northern Command, Hezbollah terrorists set two roadside bombs, then